2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

veniently arranged to be away from home. The villagers occasionally joked about the peasant who climbed a tree to escape the tax collector and had to remain in that uncomfortable predicament for many hours before the visitor left. But the Turks did recognize the traditional form of village government, or government by elders, and let the heads of the zadrugas, or large joint families, run village affairs to their liking. Most of the time, the head of the zadruga had to accept the responsibility for the deeds of all members of his family group.

These zadrugas were little principalities guided by a *stopanin,* usually the oldest male. His word was law; he distributed the work among the men, bought the necessities, sold the produce, and represented the zadruga before the outside world; therefore, the zadruga usually bore his name.[1] Whenever a son, brother, or nephew of the *stopanin* married, he brought his wife back home to become a member of his zadruga. The wife of the *stopanin,* known as the *domakinya,* managed the housework. She kept the women busy making bread, cooking, washing, spinning, and weaving. Everything was owned in common. Work too was done in common, and whatever one earned outside was turned over to the *stopanin* for the common treasury. In return, all the members got clothes and food, which in those days were about all they expected to have.

After the death of the *stopanin,* the members met to select the next most capable male as their leader. At times, the *domakinya* took over the position of responsibility. Such was doubtless what happened in the case of Baba Dragana, or her prototype, since the ending of the word Dragalevtsy would indicate that it had been settled by a zadruga. The old joint family comprised married cousins descended from the same ancestor, with the result that it sometimes numbered as many as one hundred people.

When the older Dragalevtsy peasants talked to me of the zadruga, which persisted as late as 1880 in their village, they showed that wistfulness for the past which runs through the works of many Bulgarian writers. The zadruga was supposed to be a source of plenty and happiness to its members. One aged peasant listed for me the advantages of this joint family over the modern family. First of all, he said, it had great economy. The members had only one lamp,

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

596 178 829 one stove, and one of everything, but now the same number of people living separately require many of each thing. In the second place, there was obedience. The young people respected the old. This made for efficiency, since the *stopanin* was like "a general in the army, directing the young." Finally, he concluded, all the people worked together and could earn more, thus becoming richer.

596 178 Even under the Turks the zadruga was passing from the scene because it was too unwieldy to adjust to the economic and social changes taking place. Contributing to its decline was the spirit of independence which stemmed from the French Revolution and eventually reached the Balkans. Greeks, and then Serbs, drove the Turks from their midst and established national independence. In Bulgaria and Macedonia, still under the Turks, the *haidutsi,* or guerrillas, went to the mountains every spring on Annunciation Day to spend the summer warring against their Mohammedan masters. It was this same tradition which the Yugoslav guerrillas followed in their resistance to the Nazis. This spirit of independence and the other influences from the West led one zadruga member after another to ask for a division of the common property. Usually the older men, brothers or cousins to each other, secured their shares and then established semi-patriarchal families of their own which consisted of their own sons and their sons' families. What had been common land now became the property of the individual families living in dwellings of their own. But more important sociologically than the smaller size of the individual family unit was the changed basis of authority in the family circle.

In the zadruga the head had been an overseer who achieved his position on the basis of age, ability, and special influence in the community at large. He constantly had to exercise care to keep in the good graces of the zadruga members upon whose assent his office was dependent. In this way the patriarchal pattern, although it ran through the zadruga system, was tempered by the control vested in an elected as opposed to an hereditary head. The father of an individual family, on the other hand, felt that his right of dominance was God-given. He, allied with God, invested himself with the lordship and so held his own in spite of personal unworthiness and in spite of dissension and revolt of the subject children. The father was

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

a *paterfamilias*, with a unique concentration of power in his hands. If his grown children did not submit to his control, then they could leave his house but had no means of removing him against his will. Death alone could do that.

Such was the family situation in Dragalevtsy with the coming of liberation after the Russo-Turkish War in 1878. The changes which have occurred in the family since then have been related in no small degree to the political fortunes of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian constitution was drawn up in Tirnovo in imitation of the constitutions of the West, and made Bulgaria a constitutional monarchy with a national parliament. Unfortunately, the new frame of government disregarded many traditional practices of the peasants and sought to impose upon them foreign ideas and strange governmental processes.

In April, 1879, Alexander of Battenberg, who was an officer in the Prussian army and the favorite nephew of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, was elected Prince over the country. In September, 1885, Bulgaria united with Eastern Rumelia, an area which had been placed back under nominal Turkish control by the Treaty of Berlin. Prince Alexander, because he did not collaborate sufficiently with the Russians in their desire to make Bulgaria completely subservient to Russia, was abducted from Sofia and forced to abdicate in 1886. Then the Bulgarian leaders shopped around Europe for another Prince, and finally in 1887 chose Prince Ferdinand of the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha line. He did much to make Bulgaria a stronger state, but he showed poor judgment in ordering Bulgarian troops to attack Serbia, thereby starting the Second Balkan War in which Bulgaria suffered catastrophic defeat at the hands of her former allies in the First Balkan War. In 1918, because he had been a party to the alliance of Bulgaria with the Central Powers in the First World War, he was forced to abdicate in favor of his son Boris.

From her inception as a state Bulgaria tried to make a success of representative government. Men were urged to vote; in fact, they were fined the equivalent of five dollars if they failed to vote. But in spite of the dream of Young Bulgaria at Tirnovo, in spite of her

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

641

The attitude of the peasants toward government dates from the days of Turkish rule, when the chief aim of a citizen was to deceive the tax collector. The same spirit was still prevalent in Dragalevtsy in 1937. Furthermore, government had taken such a large share in the affairs of daily life that the peasants had come to feel that government, rather than individual effort, should introduce any reforms or improvements. Typical attitudes were the following:

"In general we have enough sense to know that government is necessary, but we do not expect any favors from it except to keep peace and order and to settle disputes."

"Government exists primarily to collect heavy taxes for the purpose of paying high salaries to high officials."

"Laws are things to be written in books and not to be obeyed. There are so many laws that we don't know them. The officials don't even know them. So we don't have much faith in laws."

178
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While these political changes were occurring, things were happening to the large individual family which had come into being with the breaking up of the zadruga. Some of the forces had already been at work before the Liberation but became more evident with the westernization of the country. The impact of westernization was shown by the fact that the Bulgarians still said when they were going to western Europe, "I am going to Europe." That is, psychologically they still felt identified with the Near East, although they were more and more exposed to the material achievements of Euro-American culture. Education, whatever may have been its shortcomings, had spread rapidly and brought many individualizing tendencies; there had been an increase in commerce, which made it difficult for large family units to be as self-sustaining as formerly. The wars also, by quickening social mobility, proved harmful to the large families. One of the younger men listening in on a group of old cronies in their endless discussions of the good old days summed up the change:

"During the war [1915-1918] and after, people traveled more to other places and saw how people lived there, so we have become more modern and started dividing our estates according to the fashion. We can now live more quietly and peacefully by living separately."

178 606 596 A daughter-in-law especially disliked to live as a stranger in her husband's paternal home subject to the will of the parents-in-law. Time and time again I heard this opinion clumsily but definitely expressed:

"The large families started to break up after the wars. The chief reason for that was the daughter-in-law. Many of them come from different places and even if they come from the same village, they begin to care more for their own children and to make things for them without the knowledge of the others with whom they are living. This brings trouble among them and so they quarrel. Then they talk to their husbands; finally the brothers, although they love one another, have to separate in order to be at peace."

178 596 Ordinarily most men felt that conditions were better before the separation, though the women were more content apart. Ill will and distrust also grew up between the members of the family when some of them who worked as day laborers failed to hand over their entire earnings to the common treasury. In the villages around Sofia several brothers rarely lived together with undivided possessions after the death of their father as they would have done in the days of the zadruga. During 1935, a record year for the division of families in Dragalevtsy, there were 9 cases of estates being broken up, 3 of them the result of the separation of son and father and the remaining 6 involving the separation of brothers. When a large family divided, the younger brother usually remained in the old homestead and assumed the care of the parents.

594 178 551 This change from the large patriarchal family to the small conjugal family was having consequences which few of the peasants realized.[1] For one thing, in comparison with the larger group, the conjugal family, which consists of parents and their unmarried children, has a short life. It ends, in a sense, with the death of one of the marriage partners. This especially affects the rearing of children, who in the olden days grew up with such a bevy of cousins that a special middle name was useful in identifying each child with his particular parents. More specifically each child received a "small" or given name selected by his godparents; as a middle name he automatically added to his father's given name an *ev* or *ov* ("the son of") or, if a girl, an *eva* or *ova* ("the daughter of"). As a last name he

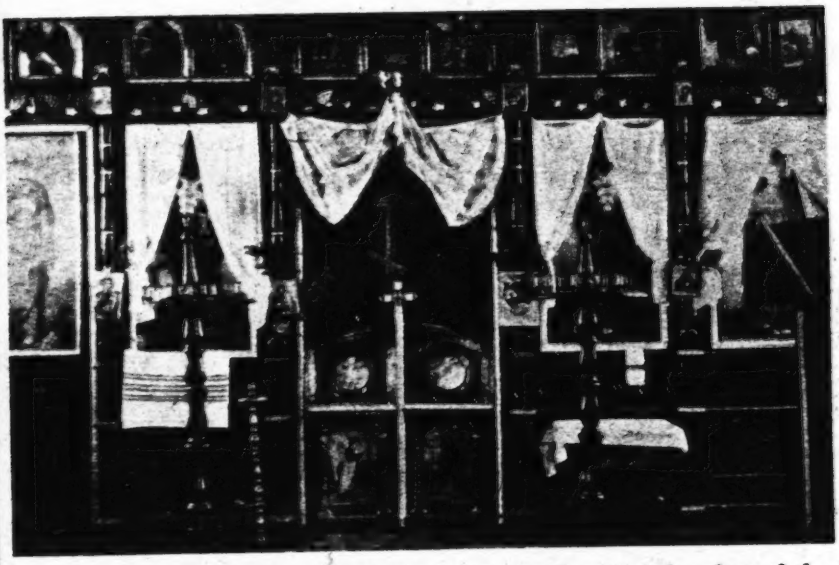
[1] [Cf. pp. 65-69, category 116--Analyst]

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

596

"The family is the productive, distributive, and consumptive unit . . ." *See page 144.*

346



". . . religion . . . has become rigidly institutionalized." (The altar of the church). *See page 145.*

[Facing p. 144]

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

CHAPTER VIII

FAMILISM, A CHANGING WAY OF LIFE

181
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THE DAY at last arrived when I could anticipate the peasants' answers to most of the questions that I asked them. When I inquired what they would do if they had five hundred dollars to spend, I could list in advance the items they would name. The older people, especially, thought and acted largely in terms of the Dragalevtsy of the "good old days," when life was lived in a *familistic* way because the family played the major role in the community. When I understood the characteristics of familism, as a result of observing and reading about peasant life in other parts of the world, the many interesting but isolated facts I had noticed in Dragalevtsy began to make sense and to form a pattern. In a familistic society, whether it is in the Balkans or China, life is largely customary and traditional. Individualism is discouraged because of the crises that the unusual person creates in the daily routine. People prefer a dead uniformity, or a leveling of the best toward the mediocre. The family plays the leading part in this task of molding an individual into the accepted pattern. From childhood to old age the kinship group brings pressure to bear upon any nonconformist, since the family as a whole loses prestige in the community if a member gets out of hand. The family, too, is the chief training ground for the young, and parents cannot blithely transfer any responsibility of this sort to an outside agency such as the school or the church. Village opinion holds the parents accountable.

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Furthermore, economic life is centered about the family. Since family members grow or make for themselves most of the things they need, they depend only to a minor degree upon stores, factories, and other commercial agencies. The family is the productive, distributive, and consumptive unit. This is one reason why village families can weather so many wars and so many depressions: they can satisfy most of their immediate wants at home.

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

Visitors suddenly confronted with the familistic way of life for the first time are often shocked at the low level of living which they observe: animals sharing the same dwelling; monotonous diet and low health standards; waste of time and energy with inefficient tools and methods. Before the peasant is condemned as unambitious, indolent, or stupid, there are a few things the outsider must bear in mind. In agricultural villages throughout the world the land base has been shrinking while the population has been expanding. This has meant decreased economic opportunity. Farms which were once adequate are now divided up strip by strip and handed over to many descendants, with the results that the term "eking out a living" has come to have real meaning for the peasant. The outsider often forgets that the rise in the level of living in the cities through the techniques of mass production and mass distribution has been relatively recent and phenomenally rapid. The villager is not really so far behind the times if one compares his life with that of many cities a few decades ago, or with the blighted areas of these same cities today. But one cannot deny that quite a few peasants seem to take pride in resisting social change; they are slow to experiment with new methods, and they assume that what was good enough for their fathers is good enough for them. This resistance is based, to a great degree, upon the realization that accepting too much from outside will seriously affect the social organization of their community. Urban society is not nearly so close-knit and can allow for contradictions and inconsistencies on a much broader scale than can the village, where life is still intimate and face-to-face. Dragalevtsy people, for example, in 1937 were conscious of the far-reaching changes brought about by the abandonment of sheep raising in favor of dairying. Sometime ago, a number of the peasants actively resisted this economic trend. In the opinion of many, these conservatives were stupid; at the same time they were bright enough to figure out that changes would result in the economy to which they were accustomed. Because they were accustomed to it, they wanted to preserve it.

In a familistic society religion has usually become rigidly institutionalized and is closely allied with the family. All family events call for the blessing of the religious intermediary; there are usually household shrines; there is considerable emphasis upon observing the

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

forms of the religion; and usually the prevailing religion has a monopoly in its field. Where there once existed two or three competing religions, the peasants now have a syncretistic set of beliefs that almost all of the people accept.

The population in a familistic society tends to be stable. The folk legends and religious beliefs stress the importance of remaining at home. Permanence becomes a virtue, for travel outside introduces too much novelty. Separation places a strain upon the family relationships, which must be kept at full vigor in the interest of community self-preservation.

Recreation is personalized instead of being commercialized. Peasants, as far as possible, spend their leisure hours in the company of others, to say nothing of the many hours women spend working with each other within a family or neighborhood circle. Just as the villagers have ceremonial ways of doing many things, they also have formal ways, or proverbs, of saying many things. This we saw earlier in the description of the *Sedenki*. Proverbs reinforce those beliefs that help maintain the familistic society, and serve as convenient means of self-expression. At the same time they are standards of behavior.

Because recreation and economic life are personal, the familistic society has little need for much reading and writing. The priest, the middlemen, the taxgatherers, and a few others who early associated themselves with the village economy needed to "figure," but the rest of the people had little concern with that.

In most family-dominated societies, life is man-centered. In some areas this arrangement is related to religious beliefs; in others, it is related to the economic organization of the family in which somebody has to give orders necessary to the carrying out of the daily activities. A recognized head, conscious of his own importance, acts authoritatively in directing his family group.

The local government is traditionally managed by elders, who represent families rather than political parties or individuals. The village elders make their decisions from the standpoint of what is good for the village as a whole in the light of precedents rather than from a narrow legalism. The religious writings or sacred legends are conveniently cited to justify the actions they take. Such govern-

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

mental activity exists primarily to meet crisis situations and to keep the established ways of life moving smoothly. The giving of relief, the provision of education, healing of the sick, insurance of cattle and crops are all left to the family rather than to the government.

It is quite possible for several societies to use the familistic approach, in the sense that the family is the dominant institution, and still differ as to the relative importance of many community values. Most of them would probably respect the heritage from the past, but even here there would be variations. As far as Dragalevtsy was concerned, the chief values or virtues were land ownership, hard work, frugality, premarital chastity, observance of some of the more important religious rites, and being a good neighbor. In connection with the last, the villagers said, "God help those with bad neighbors" and "Without good neighbors life couldn't go on."

The Dragalevtsy people, although their underlying organization and philosophy was primarily familistic, had adjusted themselves to a number of modern ways. Some ways persisted because they fitted in with the established customs, and others because they were kept in vogue by force or by the authority of the mayor.

Commerce, as represented by about ten merchant groups, had become established in the village because it was conducted essentially as a family enterprise. From time to time a local man sold some of his land and started in business for himself. He always employed members of his family rather than outsiders, because he trusted his own. If he needed extra help and had an unmarried son, the normal thing was to urge matrimony. He carried over into his business the same idea of division of labor which prevailed at home and in the field. The men ordered the goods, settled the accounts, sold the liquor in the taverns. The women acted as cooks or clerks. Some of the wives who helped keep the store could not read, write, add, or subtract and had to give whole measurements or else depend upon the customer to hand them the right amount for fractions. A husband explained when I discussed the matter with him, "It is better to lose money through error than through dishonesty." Both men and women co-operated in keeping the place clean. Here the man made a concession which he would seldom have made in the home.

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

441
596

These merchant groups, with the exception of two or three of the most prosperous, led a precarious, short-lived existence. During the three years in which I knew the village, three successive proprietors managed a business undertaking in one building alone. Bai Penko's tavern, the largest of all, was founded thirty years ago by his father; another tavern which was founded fifty years ago had been owned by the present proprietor for ten years; one grocery store was started in 1935, and another was taken over by its present managers in 1936.

The largest grocery store had stock, which I carefully inventoried, approximating $200 in value. It included many articles which would have been found in an American country store a generation ago. *(See Appendix III.)*

The degree to which the old familistic way of doing things pervaded the local businesses was shown by the nature of the groups that conducted these businesses. In the case of one grocery store two men were in partnership. One partner took care of the cardplaying, which he promoted in a small space at the end of the store, and his wife took care of the grocery section. The second partner, in addition to helping with the cardplaying and the grocery work, mixed bread for the bakery downstairs, and sent his wife up to work in the store when she was not busy in the bakery. The stock of goods in this particular store was very small, and so was the clientele. The proprietor of a second grocery store was usually away from his place of business, leaving his wife in charge. She was quite dissatisfied with the present arrangement, saying, "I have to get up at two or three in the morning to do the housework before coming to the store. I go to bed at night between eleven and eleven-thirty. Life is full of hard work, but life is more sure now because we have food and money." This couple, incidentally, was one of the few childless couples in the village.

Bai Penko, too, made use of members of his family. He himself was the general manager and worked several hours a day in the tavern; his wife was in charge of the kitchen; the older daughter took care of the six or seven upstairs rooms which were rented to the veterinarian and summer guests when not occupied by members of the family. The older son, Pano, was in charge of serving drink and

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

441
576

food, and of all accounts connected with this service. His younger brother was in charge of the small grocery store next door, though he often turned the store over to his mother while he served drinks at rush hours in the tavern. The younger daughter helped with both housework and the grocery store, while the eighteen-year-old granddaughter did the heavy, disagreeable work. Both sons married shortly before I left Dragalevtsy and their wives spent several hours each day working under the direction of Bai Penko's wife. Because of this large family circle Bai Penko hired two men only on holidays, one as an extra waiter and the other to roast meat freshly killed for the occasion.

Familistic, or at least personal, reasons determined why families traded with one particular merchant. Reasons such as these were most frequently cited:

"We are close friends."

"We are slightly related."

"He loans me money when I need it."

"We were members of the same political party."

"I had a quarrel with the proprietor of another grocery store, so changed to this one."

Only occasionally did the people say:

"He sells pure and fine goods."

"His prices are cheaper."

Just the same, there did seem to be considerable shopping around on the part of the villagers. They favored those places where they could get credit. But here again family connections helped decide whether or not a man could get credit from a given merchant. Credit was extended with discrimination. A poor risk, when credit was refused, frequently transferred his trade to a different store. The older proprietors were often called upon to give advice, and thus enjoyed an advantage over the younger businessmen trying to establish themselves. One of these young men said to me: "Because of my age, nobody comes to me for advice. That is why my trade is small."

Commerce also made its way into Dragalevtsy through a few commission merchants who regularly visited the peasants to buy eggs, poultry, and livestock. Occasionally they speculated in land.

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

441 In Dragalevtsy, therefore, familism had yielded some ground to
● 596 commerce. People did make occasional purchases in the village and
[178] in Sofia. They talked more and thought more about money. They even valued it more highly than a generation ago, but the basis of their economic life remained self-subsistent, with an emphasis upon goods, not cash.

476 Co-operatives had also come to Dragalevtsy. In a very real sense
596 village life itself was a co-operative enterprise, although it did not possess the specific characteristics of an economic co-operative. The large joint family, which has been widely prevalent throughout the world, also had many elements of the co-operative which have been maintained, at least in the sentiments of the people, even though the family group has become individualized and smaller.

Self-subsistent peasant farmers are accustomed to working together when something needs to be done. Theirs is, after all, a co-operative way of life. They also know that their own hard work and their own planning are responsible for whatever success they achieve. They are suspicious of outsiders who seek to organize them, and are fearful that any tie-up with the business interests outside the village means loss rather than gain. They are not accustomed to using money to make more money, although they know well enough what it means to pay interest on borrowed money.

[369] Agricultural co-operatives often gain adherents more quickly
[423] when there is a feeling of distinction or distrust between city and the country people. This is because co-operatives have been identified in such places with the agrarianism which unites the peasants. The profit motive of capitalism is linked, in the minds of many villagers, with the urban businessman, in spite of the fact that the villager who owns his land is also a capitalist. Perhaps it is this idea which Americans find hardest to grasp in their evaluation of peasant Europe. Land is not something to be bought and unfeelingly sold for money. It is rather a means of livelihood, an extension of oneself and one's family.

476 As the merchant groups in the villages are few and insecure, the co-operatives do not have the opposition of vested interests which they face in a more highly developed economy. I realized from the beginning that co-operatives had made much less headway in Dragalevtsy

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

than in many other Bulgarian communities. The secretary of the General Union of Bulgarian Agricultural Cooperatives explained: "The farmers live near the city and prefer to market their goods themselves rather than through the medium of co-operatives. They find that they get higher prices in the Sofia bazaar than they would receive from co-operatives." 476

Nevertheless, the three co-operatives represented in Dragalevtsy gave me some insight into the reasons for success and failure of those which did get off to a start. The co-operative which had made most progress in Dragalevtsy was a purely local affair which arose to meet a definite need. In some respects it was more like a corporation than a co-operative, but it was a "combining together" to get something done.

One of the richer families in the village used to spend twenty-five days threshing its grain with horses. As a result, the family began to think of using a machine to do the work. The idea incubated until Trayko Danev decided to take the initial plunge and persuaded his relatives to plunge with him. Two other men joined them in the purchase of a threshing machine in 1930. Their purpose was to thresh their own wheat and, if possible, thresh the wheat of others for a fair return. The first years of the ring's existence, when the price of wheat was high, were the best years. Between 1935 and 1937 the prices were so low that the group just managed to cover its expenses. However, because of their 400,000 leva ($4,878 at 1937 exchange rate) investment, the men did not think of giving up the ring. 476 243

The structure of this group was simple. Annually, a president, a treasurer, and a manager were elected to control the operations of the ring. The manager, who had technical training, received a salary. Two workers and a machinist were employed from outside and were paid a percentage of the wheat threshed. In 1935 they threshed the wheat of fifty-five farms, including that of the original ten partners. A written agreement existed among all members, who paid in wheat, which was sold for a sum to be divided among the members.

The familistic background of this group was interesting. The originators were all members or cousins of the Danev family except two rich landowners living in the center of the village, who were close friends of the Danevi. After four of the original partners died, 596 476 243

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

596 476 243 their sons or sons-in-law succeeded to the control of their shares. The five Danevi outnumbered the others, forming a unit around which clustered three other members. There was some friction whenever meetings were held, but the minority was easily suppressed by the majority.

Most of the group considered membership an honor, symbolizing wealth and importance. Generally the village approved its existence, as shown by the increasing number of families who sought its services at threshing time.

476 234 Twenty-one Dragalevtsy men also belonged to the Animal Husbandry-Dairy Cooperative, with headquarters in Sofia. This group had a twofold aim: (1) to enable members to get animal feed on credit and more cheaply; (2) to develop a milk distributing center. Though Dragalevtsy members did not have regular meetings in the village, most of them attended the annual meeting held in Sofia at which the reports of the officers of the co-operative were read. Before this annual meeting the Dragalevtsy men got together in the village and agreed on common action at the Sofia meeting. Dragalevtsy had one representative on the Executive Committee and one on the Control Committee. These men kept the villagers informed as to the condition of the co-operative. Two or three Dragalevtsy people had resigned, recently saying that "there were hidden matters." Most of the men who still belonged said that their membership entitled them to cheaper feed for their animals. I asked ten of the members why they belonged to the co-operative:

"I get cheaper feed through the co-operative."

"I joined in order to work collectively; to have a central depot for milk."

"The co-operative gives credit for food at a lower price."

The agricultural crisis through which Bulgaria had been passing reflected itself in the life of this co-operative. With the hard times, peasants said they did not have enough ready cash for their dues, and so dropped out. However, one could not consider this a true village organization because its physical basis was Sofia, and there was no formal organization operating in Dragalevtsy as a local.

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

to a position of importance they answered: "We should choose a new executive committee, put the library in order, lend out the books, have more evening entertainments. To do this we should get in touch with people in Sofia." 575 829

Part of the trouble arose from disagreement among the officers. In the words of one member, "An organization cannot get ahead with that sort of business." But even more of the trouble went back to the fact that the organizers had not convinced the villagers of the importance of the group. Meanwhile, most peasants looked upon it as an importation of interest only to the intelligentsia and their hangers-on.

The experiences of the *Chitalishte* and other organizations in Dragalevtsy revealed that the peasants were not organization-minded. Even if we included the governmental groups to be discussed in the next chapter, we would find that less than ten women in the village belonged to any formal group, and only 107 of the 510 men over twenty years of age had an organizational membership. Where people's homes were so conveniently located one would expect greater participation on the part of the men, at least. But almost four-fifths of them avoided any organizational affiliation, largely because they were not accustomed to using an organization to do what they thought needed to be done. One of the most frequent reasons for failure to join was this: "Why should I pay the fees charged when I would get nothing in return?" 575

In this world of competing *isms* Dragalevtsy represented in 1937 a modification of familism, the oldest and most widespread way of life we know, perpetuated by agricultural villages all over the world. But familism was slowly losing out. In some quarters of the world the commercialism of a capitalistic system was supplanting the older values with money values; in other quarters the collectivism of a communist society was shaking the economic foundations of the large family group. 178 596

As far as Dragalevtsy was concerned, commercialism was in its infancy. Back in 1937 communism might have seemed to the outsider to have a hold on this village as well as on others in Bulgaria

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

178
596

because of the old affection the Bulgarian peasants had felt for the Russians since the days when the Tsar Alexander II of Russia helped free Bulgaria from Turkish control. Contemporary Russia also was making its appeal through Bulgarian communists who had taken the agrarian, or "rights-for-peasants," aspect of the modern Russian system and expounded it to the peasants as communism. Although it was doubtful whether the Dragalevtsy peasant had any clear idea of collectivism, it was certain that he would have been completely bewildered by the idea of giving up his cherished holdings to the state.

Dragalevtsy, therefore, was something of an anachronism, for the familistic system still had a firm grip on many of the adults. Their ideas had been set a generation ago by parents who subscribed unquestioningly to the familistic way of life. The young people, on the other hand, were receptive to other values and other standards and were ready to look more and more to the "people of the world" for guidance and leadership.

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

466
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The *trudova* system existed in principle until Bulgaria joined the Axis, though, she like all countries defeated in the first World War, passed through a period when compulsory labor was gradually replaced by compulsory military service. After the *coup d'état* of May, 1934, various groups of army officers controlled many of the country's policies; so it was not surprising to learn of the strengthening of the military forces of the nation. One sign of the government's changed policy was the fact that in 1935 not a single young man from Dragalevtsy went as a *trudovak*, but sixteen were called to do military service. Those eligible for service were called before a commission of army officers and examined; the successful ones passed on to receive military training, and the rest were returned home. Those who were rejected lost some standing in the eyes of the villagers, because it was thought that they had inherited some family weakness. The *family* rather than the individual was blamed.

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There was undeniably a great influence exercised upon the village by the practice of taking young men, in their impressionable years, away from the village for an interval of several months. They lived in an army barracks or a *trudovak* camp with other young men from different parts of the country. For a time they ceased doing some things which the village thought essential, and they learned to do other things which older family members would perhaps have frowned upon. They went out from a family system where each member worked more or less as a part of the whole; they returned often very conscious of their own individuality, and had to pass through a process of reconditioning before the early customs, habits, and patterns of thought once more closed about them. There were some individuals who never again fell completely into line and who turned to Sofia for employment and a more congenial atmosphere.

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Older men who returned to the village as retired noncommissioned officers enjoyed a certain prestige that lingered after brass buttons and clumping boots had been exchanged for the conventional village attire. On the wall of the office of the Village Clerk, the names of all local officials and public employees were posted. There was considerable information regarding each man, but the concluding and perhaps most important item was the statement of the person's service

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

659 794 a year, the priest asked the board members to assemble at the church, minutes were kept, and no outsiders attended. The government's influence was further felt during the period 1934-1937, when all political elections were suspended, and with these all church board elections too. No one was eligible to vote.

659 869 771 As the national school and church authorities had not been satisfied with the type of religious training that the children had been getting in the average peasant home, they had set up in each village an organization called "The Association for the Orthodox Christianization of Bulgarian Youth." In general, the work of the group consisted in teaching the school children the significance of the iconostas, church ceremonies, and other related matters. School hours were used, and attendance was compulsory. The school director, who had been asked by the Archbishop in Sofia to conduct the work of the association in co-operation with the priest, said that they had had about twenty-five meetings during the year. Parents and others who were interested attended these meetings. This was one activity which the peasants had accepted quite willingly because, as one woman said, "the children are kept off the streets when there is a group gathering, and thus do not learn so many bad things." This was the woman's way of berating parents for failing to take better care of their children. But fundamentally the acceptance was based upon the traditional recognition of the church's importance. In the past, whatever had bolstered up the established church had bolstered up the familistic system.

178 181 596 Such a barrage from the batteries of commerce, government, and education[1] had left the familistic way of life in Dragalevtsy battered but not crumbling. The peasants were still amused at the intense activity of the intelligentsia; the few who were asked to confer with the authorities enjoyed reporting back to their families and friends just what they said and did. The people co-operated in the campaigns for this-and-that only when they knew that the mayor would send the policeman along if they did not co-operate. They attended lectures when ordered to do so, but they joined few of the organizations planned outside. Perhaps the best indication that this beehive of governmental activity was still on the surface was the failure of the peasants to seek advice from the intelligentsia who were supposedly there to help

[1] [For a detailed account, see category 114, pp. 161-176.--Analyst]

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

them. An exceptional peasant did; but the vast majority kept an eye upon what was going on without becoming involved in any newly initiated affairs.

Just the same, changes were in the making. Year after year, within given limits, people would be content to do what the authorities told them to do. This was because their family life, with its emphasis upon obedience and respect, had made them docile. If the commands proved too disruptive, however, or took away the things they counted most dear, their family and their land, they resisted.

But the peasants were little interested in fighting for political rights; these were individualistic and not in keeping with familism, which emphasized the welfare of the group rather than the rights of the individual. They did not yet want to have a hand in what went on in Sofia, in Berlin, or Washington. They still were village oriented. To be sure, war affected them, as did the price of grain, but in much the same fatalistic way that a heat wave or a cold snap would. They did not yet feel that they, and millions like them throughout Bulgaria, had the power to control many things affecting their daily life. Some of their fellow villagers in other parts of Bulgaria were alive to this fact, but Dragalevtsy was still politically illiterate.

The leaders in the village were aware of their lack of success. Some of them were disappointed in the peasants for not accepting at face value the words of wisdom they proffered so freely; others cautioned patience. They said, "We can't change things overnight. We will work with the children in the school. Our future lies with them." And they were right. But it was clear that the future they anticipated would be much more distant if the leaders continued to force upon the peasants a way of life imported from "the people of the outside world." Their quickest success lay in evaluating the familistic society that existed, in deciding what should be retained, and what changes should be made. The next step would be to discover by what means, already in use in the village, these changes could be effected. Then, above all, the leaders should have sought to persuade the peasants to help themselves. The governmental paternalism at work in Dragalevtsy created as many local problems as it solved.

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

178 181 ●596 The conflict was on, then, between the old and the new, between familism and the forces from the "people of the outside world." It was a stirring struggle when viewed in terms of people I had come to know and respect. It became a significant struggle when I remembered that Dragalevtsy was only one village out of hundreds of thousands where the conflict was even then being dramatically staged.

000 The new way of life that emerges may be more democratic or it may be the basis for additional authoritarian states. Democracy can be assured only if its representatives, who introduce the new, have an insight into the peasants' way of life, a sympathy that is so genuine that it can be quickly sensed by untutored folk, and a skill that can weave into the fabric of the past the strands of the present, in keeping with a sensible pattern for the future.

DEPARTURE—AUGUST, 1937

000 THE VILLAGE seemed unusually peaceful on that August day in 1937 when I made the rounds to tell my friends in Dragalevtsy goodbye. Many wanted to know how long the trip to America would take, others asked about my future plans. The majority said, *"do vizhdane"* ("till we meet again"), but several of the older people, who had patiently endured many hours of interviews in the previous months, sensed that their "time" would come before I set foot in Dragalevtsy again. They used the other form of leave-taking—*"sbogom"* ("God be with you"), and also asked God's blessing upon my trip. The mayor told me how much he had enjoyed having me study his village, the priest asked me not to forget my many friends, and Bai Penko took great delight in showing off his new grandson whom I had never seen.

The weather was hot. Few people moved through the Square and only occasionally did a wagon creak down the streets to the fields below the village. Even the flies, usually so troublesome, seemed languid. The dogs slept. Vitosha had lost its cap of snow. Storks

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

575 taken such an interest, had long ceased to have any importance. This
178 was also true of the Union for Protection of Children, which had had as its chief function the provision of school lunches for the poor children. The Association for the Decoration for Valor was still tottering along, and its members hoped eventually to enroll three or four members who had participated in the recent war. The School Board had become a thing of the past as the control of the school passed into the hands of the Sofia School System. The Church Board, however, was maintaining its existence and was giving its support to a new organization called the Christian Union which had been founded during the Fascist regime as a religious welfare organization. Before the coming of the Russians this Christian Union had collected and distributed to the poor families at Christmas time and the New Year an amount varying from sixty to seventy thousand leva. In 1945 it boasted about seventy-five members and was flourishing.

For the most part, however, the village organizations died at birth or perished in early infancy, as an earlier chapter showed. The
● [596] Dragalevtsy peasant had not yet become a joiner.[1] He gained his social status by the position his family held rather than by the numbers and types of organizations to which he, as an individual, was elected

183 Such, then, was the prelude to Communism. The coming of the
178 National State to the village back in 1934 set a pattern by which each peasant household was later on closely geared in with a totalitarian wartime economy. The majority of traditions were holding firm among the middle-aged and old, while many of the younger people no longer disguised their interest in the fascinating ways of the West. The net effect of the war was to commercialize more fully the village's economic life and make the peasants more money-conscious. Their incorporation into the Sofia municipality as well as the Fascist nature of their state made them feel less responsible as individuals for governmental affairs and drew them farther away from the democratic Slavic tradition inherent in their old joint family system. Religion continued to be accepted as a matter of course, for no one questioned the propriety of having a priest officiate on ceremonial or patriotic occasions.

1 [As of 1945--Analyst]

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

668 nevertheless seemed important to the peasant. I recall one such
178 discussion which dealt with the idea of a shortened work-week at the
626 factories. The peasants disapproved of the whole plan and used it
423 as a basis for condemning land collectivization because "We want to
829 be able to work as long as we want without having people tell us that we have to stop working."

Peasants were greatly confused, therefore, over the farm policies to be pursued in the next two or three years. They planned and schemed and talked endlessly about what they should plant, what they should do about their debts, or whether the aged fathers should distribute their land to their sons before they died. But always there was the great unknown of government policy which upset their calculations and kept them insecure.

668 Another important social change was occuring in the institutional
178 pattern of Dragalevtsy. In earlier chapters we noted how the en-
● 596 croachment of the state was making considerable impact upon the traditional familistic patterns, while economic life was becoming more commercialized and religious activities were declining in importance. The coming of the Communists had begun to weaken the family ties even further, for the Fatherland Front had given votes to all women and had thus attacked the dogma of male supremacy; it had honored the young at the expense of the aged; and it had turned brother against brother as the struggle for control grew more bitter. As the representative of the central government, the Fatherland Front was affecting an even larger area of life than the prewar regime did, especially when its economic regulations and its threat to the hallowed traditional system of landownership.

668 Another disturbing effect was the substitution of Moscow as
771 the center of the universe, for the Communist adherents at least, when
178 formerly Dragalevtsy or perhaps Sofia by courtesy was thought to be
829 the center. These innovations of the present government had done much to prejudice it in the eyes of the people, who made decisions not upon the basic issues which the government was striving to champion, but resisted blindly and perhaps fanatically simply because the new regime spelled the end of their way of life. As they realized this, some of the peasants turned more and more to the church, the institu-

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

APPENDIX IV

NEIGHBORHOODS AND NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS IN A BULGARIAN VILLAGE*

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During my first three years in Bulgaria, 1929-1932, I became generally acquainted with its rural life. When I returned to Bulgaria in 1934 for another three-year period I chose for special study one village, Dragalevtsy by name, whose 1,669 inhabitants live in houses clustered near the foot of Mount Vitosha four miles from the outskirts of Sofia. I visited the village on frequent occasions and lived there for weeks at a time. Although my investigations led me to consider many things such as the basic institutions, the formal and informal groupings, customs and folklore, along with the operation of the social processes, social control, and social change, one of the most difficult of the social phenomena for me, an outsider, to understand was the *mahala,* or neighborhood.

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THE MAHALA. Dragalevtsy, like the majority of European agricultural villages, is a compact settlement of farmers whose land lies around the village in strips, numbering approximately 16 per Dragalevtsy farmer. The village is at least four centuries old and has grown but slowly during that time. Until three or four generations ago all life was organized around the patriarchal *zadruga,*[1] or joint-family. The members of such a family owned everything in common and worked in harmony under the administrator or *domakin,* the acknowledged head of the *zadruga.* Although their dwellings were crude and overcrowded each *zadruga* needed a large plot of land around the houses for the flocks of sheep and other animals kept at home during the winter months. With the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkey in 1878 forces were let loose which hastened the break-up of the joint-family system.[2] Brothers moved away from the paternal home into dwellings of their own, these usually being

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* This article appeared in *Social Forces,* XVII, No. 4, May, 1939. Reprinted by permission.

[1] Ivan Evstatiev Geshov, *Zadrugite Vu Zapadna Bulgaria,* Per. Spisanie, God. V. Kn. xix i xx, str. 426, Stredets, 1886.

St. L. Kostov and E. Peteva, *Selski Bit i Izkustvo Vu Sofisko,* Sofia, 1935, str. 38.

[2] Some of the factors contributing to this break-up: (a) individualization following Bulgaria's liberation in 1878 and the spread of popular education; (b) fashion of small, individual families in the West; (c) disagreement between the wives of brothers living together under the same roof; (d) unwillingness of men working outside the *zadruga,* either as laborers or professional men, to hand over their whole earnings to the common treasury; (e) woman's newly-acquired right of inheritance.

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

constructed on a part of the large plot of ground belonging to the dissolving *zadruga*. It therefore happened after a generation or so that six or seven houses whose heads all bore the same family name were located in a particular section of the village. Such clusters of houses in Dragalevtsy were called a *mahala* and often bore the name of the oldest living member of the family such as "Grandfather Grigor's *Mahala*." This usage of the term grew up quite unconsciously on the part of the peasants, and even today they use the term *mahala* without any clear conception of just what they mean by it.

At first glance it seems that *mahala* means a certain section of the village because it is often referred to in giving directions, but it is more correct to say that the peasant really means "over there in that particular section of the village where all of those related Manchevi live." This means that the *mahala* has both a geographical and kinship nature. On the other hand, if one of the Manchev men should for any reason move to another section of the village, he would still consider himself a Manchev, while admitting that he lived in a different *mahala*, and that the Mancheva *mahala* would not be extended to include him. In other words, the *mahala* is not identical with the term *rodstvo*, which means the large family connections. It applies only to those large family connections living in close proximity plus any other families dwelling among them. And this latter element is becoming of more importance. Today traces of kinship are beginning to vanish because the origins go back too far and because outsiders are slowly moving into Dragalevtsy.

The *mahala* never acts as a unit about anything, because its geographical character is its predominating aspect. Every villager can give the names of the other homes in his particular *mahala* and can even plot the *mahala* boundaries on a map of the village. But this does not mean that he feels any psychological bond connecting him with each of those homes any more than would the people who live on the same street in a small American town. Yet the very fact that they live near one another means that they will tend to interact more with one another than with people living on the other side of the village. This is why the *mahala* becomes important in a sociological analysis: it locates an individual in a given environmental setting.[8]

[8] Louis Petroff in his article "Peasant Primary Groups in Bulgaria" (*Sociology and Social Research*, 13, p. 557) thinks of the *mahla* (so he transliterates the word) as one of the important primary groups of the Bulgarian village. In his article he does not attempt to explain the origin of the *mahala* but thinks of it rather as "A section of the village separated by a small stream, a hill, a main road or a similar boundary. Or it may be a cluster of houses around a centering place, such as an inn or a store, but most commonly around a water fountain or a well." In Dragalevtsy the *mahala* originated as a kinship group, though the land originally owned by a *zadruga* was doubtless determined largely by geographical factors. The kinship origin is also shown by the fact that all the *mahali* in Dragalevtsy bear family names rather than those based on topographical or economic features.

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
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APPENDIX VI

SOCIOMETRIC WORK WITH A BULGARIAN WOODCUTTING GROUP[1]

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In the late autumn, when all other farm work has been completed, the villagers of Dragalevtsy[2] turn their attention to the gathering of the winter's supply of wood. The scene of their activity is a wooded section of the mountainside, three or four miles from the village, determined in advance by a forester's decree. Most of them toil gladly, since all winter long they must continually feed the wood into the ever-devouring gullet of the sheet-iron stove standing in the center of the living room. No twig is too small to find its way there.

It would be wrong to imagine that the villagers were doing any lumbering, even on the simplest scale. Most of their activity centers around the task of cutting down brush as high as a man's head, or of felling trees so small that a pair of hands could include the trunk in its grasp.

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I. MEMBERSHIP OF GROUP. There are ten wood-gathering groups in the village. Before 1931 individual families went to the section of the forest opened up for the people of Dragalevtsy and took all the wood they could get in the time allowed. This system had two chief faults, according to Yurdan Chalukov, the assistant mayor at the time: in the first place, the members of the political party supporting the mayor learned beforehand at what time the forest would be opened to the villagers and stole the march on the others by going there on the day assigned, although the other villagers did not learn about the opening until two or three days later, by which time the best wood had been collected.

The second chief fault with this system was that families with more able-bodied workers gathered the most wood, although they paid perhaps less taxes than those who got less. In order to eliminate these evils, a new system which is peculiar to Dragalevtsy alone was inaugurated. The near-by villages, for instance, still use the older method of permitting each family to "grab while

[1] This article appeared in *Sociometry: A Journal of Interpersonal Relations*, II, October, 1939, pp. 58-68. Reprinted by permission.

[2] Dragalevtsy, a village of 1,669 inhabitants, located four miles from the outskirts of Sofia, Bulgaria's capital city. The peasants of that region are generally regarded as very conservative by educated Bulgarians.

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

the grabbing is good." Now, the *Obshtina*[1] divides the village into ten groups; the part of the forest made available to the villagers is likewise divided into ten sections; each group thus has a limited section in which to work. The *Obshtina* usually divides the village according to neighborhoods, though sometimes one family from a larger neighborhood is assigned to the group of a smaller neighborhood in order to make the number of families average about thirty for each group. The only case of this kind in Group X, which we are studying, is that of Krustan Arnaudski, who lives across the river from the others.

The *Obshtina* lists the names of the family heads in making out its divisions; theoretically these family heads are supposed to go collectively to get the wood for their households. In other words, they are supposed to constitute the group. However, variations occur. Some of the family heads are too old or too busy or too lazy to go. In that case they do one of three things: (1) they send their married sons who live with them, these sons performing the work more capably than the older men could; (2) they hire village youths from other neighborhoods to go and gather the wood for them; or, (3) they send weaker members of their own family, such as younger boys, the older girls, wives, or—in the case of one lazy man—a mother.

Thus, in reality, the group of wood-gatherers varies from day to day as regards the actual personnel of those working in the forest. We might say that most of those working there are family heads or able-bodied married sons, though mixed with them are women, girls, and younger boys. Before sending a substitute the family head is supposed to get permission from the group leaders. The failure to do this results in many quarrels and, as one leader says, "makes a man quarrel with his best friend."

The reason why the presence of women and children is frowned upon lies not so much in the objection to women and children working, as it does to the fact that women and children cannot do as much work in a day as a man. Since all the cut wood is piled into thirty different piles, one for each family, and the piles later distributed by lot, those who work hard each day get no more wood than those who do less work or who send weaker substitutes.

The question arises as to the classification of this type of group. On the basis of admission to membership, we can conclude that it is chiefly involuntary since the family heads are assigned by the *Obshtina* and since the family head can order members of his family to replace him in case he does not care to go. Only in the case of outsiders gathering wood for pay does the group seem voluntary. The group is secondary as far as function is concerned, but partakes of certain primary group characteristics when we notice that the *Obshtina*

[1] *Obshtina*—used here in the sense of the local governmental unit under the direction of a mayor appointed from Sofia.

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

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of the population in 1926 have been returning to Turkey at a greatly accelerated pace.

There are striking anthropological contrasts between the Bulgarian peasant and the Southern white. The most marked of these is the peasant's close identification with a folk culture which is characterized by a consciousness of kind, established patterns of habit and thought, artifacts identified with that culture alone, and a strong exercise of social control. There is also uniformity of dress, agricultural method, and social values.

Among the Southern whites the Appalachian-Ozark area alone possesses the characteristics of a folk, for its people are closely knit together, have mountain handicrafts of which they are proud,[33] and, although differing in economic status, tend to conform to cultural patterns handed from the past. On the contrary, the tenant farmer may have his share of superstitions, folk remedies, and traditional attitudes, but he lacks "consciousness of kind" which would identify him with a folk culture.[34]

The four social institutions which I wish to mention briefly but which I shall not compare in detail are the family, education, religion, and government.[35]

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The Bulgarian family is patriarchal, children are valued as economic assets; there is a strong kinship feeling even unto the third and fourth generation. Marriage is still an arrangement between two families under the sole control of the church. Family disorganization in the form of desertion or divorce is practically unknown; illegitimacy rare.

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There is compulsory education to the fourteenth year in Bulgaria. However, the law is seldom invoked because the parents have recognized the economic value of education. That is why Bulgaria is the most literate country in the Balkans, a testimony to the high value the peasants place upon education and the rigid social control at work in the compact villages. If some

[33] W. T. Couch, *op. cit.*, chapter 15—The Handicrafts by Allen H. Eaten; chapter 19—Appalachian America by J. Worley Hatcher; chapter 26—Folk and Folklore by B. A. Botkin.

[34] The folk culture is quite different from a regional or Southern culture such as Odum describes at length in his Chapter IX in *Southern Regions* on Institutions and Folkways. The Bulgarian peasant is primarily identified with the village culture and secondarily with newer national culture in process of development. The Southern white is identified with a regional culture but not with a folk culture.

[35] Because of space limitations I omitted a section dealing with Psychological Comparisons. This would have compared the race prejudice and regional "inferiority complex" of the Southerner with the nationalism and sensitiveness to criticism of the Bulgarian. Bulgaria, defeated in the World War, has its Lost Cause as does the South. Bulgarians, like Southerners, have gained the reputation for conservatism and hospitality. On the other hand, industry is more a Bulgarian than a Southern trait.